

CHARACTER EDUCATION

Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) provides, within its existing programs and practices, student character education. The purpose of these programs and practices are to foster civic virtues and personal character traits so as to improve the learning environment, promote student achievement, reduce disciplinary problems, and develop civic-minded students of high character. These programs and practices are cooperatively developed with students, parents, and the community.

Character education is interwoven into school procedures and the environment so as to instruct primarily by example, illustration, and participation in a way that complements the Standards of Learning. Classroom instruction may also be used to supplement the program. The character education program also addresses the inappropriateness of bullying, as defined in Va. Code § 22.1-276.01. Parents/guardians have the right to review any audio-visual materials that contain graphic sexual or violent content used in any anti-bullying program. Prior to the use of any such material, the parent/guardian of a child participating in such a program is provided written notice of the parent's/guardian's right to review the material and the right to excuse the child from participating in the part of such program utilizing such material.

In alignment with Virginia Board of Education criteria, the program:

- Specifies those character traits to be taught, selecting from those which are common to diverse social, cultural, and religious groups. Specific character traits emphasized may include trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship;
- Is implemented at the elementary and secondary levels;
- Complements the state Standards of Learning; s interwoven into existing curricula and is taught primarily by example, illustration, and participation. Classroom instruction may also be used to supplement the program;
- Provides for relevant professional development and adequate resources; and
- Includes a method for program evaluation.

Character education is intended to educate students regarding those core civic values and virtues which are efficacious to civilized society and are common to the diverse social, cultural, and religious groups of the Commonwealth. It does not include indoctrination in any particular religious or political belief. Consistent with this purpose, ACPS may teach Virginia's civic values, which are the principles articulated in the Bill of Rights (Article I) of the Constitution of Virginia and the ideals reflected in the seal of the Commonwealth, as described in Va. Code 1-500, as representative of such civic values.

Va. Code 1-500 states "*The great seal of the Commonwealth shall consist of*" ... "*On the obverse, Virtus, the genius of the Commonwealth, dressed as an Amazon,*" ... "*her left foot on the form of*

48 *Tyranny represented by the prostrate body of a man” ... “in the space below, on a curved line,*
49 *shall be the motto, ‘Sic Semper Tyrannis.’ On the reverse” ... “in a curved line, the word*
50 *‘Perseverando’.*”

51

52 ACPS School Board believes that racism is a form of tyranny. Consistent with the ideals expressed
53 in the seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Board believes that high-quality character
54 education includes establishing programs and practices that work to eliminate racism as
55 articulated in the phrase Sic Semper Tyrannis (thus always to tyrants) while to helping students
56 to learn Perserverando (to persevere) in a society where the work to eliminate racism is not
57 complete.

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59 Adopted: July 1, 2005
60 Amended: June 1, 2006
61 Amended: January 22, 2015
62 Amended: October 27, 2016
63 Amended:

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66 Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-23.3, 22.1-207.2:1, 22.1-208.01.
67 VAC 1-500
68 Constitution of Virginia Article 1

69

70 Cross Refs.: IKF The Virginia Assessment Program and Graduation Requirements
71 IKF-R The Virginia Assessment Program and Graduation Requirements
72 Regulations
73 INB Teaching About Controversial Issues
74
75 INDC Religion in the Schools

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Commented [1]: Policy updates reflect 2019 enactment of Va. Code § 22.1-207.2:1 by HB 2107.
Commented [2]: Here is the statutory language: <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title22.1/chapter13/section22.1-208.01/>

Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) provides, within its existing programs and practices, a student character education program in its schools. The purpose of these programs and practices are to foster civic virtues and personal character traits so as to improve the learning environment, promote student achievement, reduce disciplinary problems, and develop civic-minded students of high character. These programs and practices may be cooperatively developed in cooperation with students, parents, and the community at large, and shall conform to the following

Character education is interwoven into school procedures and the environment so as to instruct primarily by example, illustration, and participation in a way that complements the Standards of Learning. Classroom instruction may also be used to supplement the program. The character education program also addresses the inappropriateness of bullying, as defined in Va. Code § 22.1-276.01. Parents/guardians have the right to review any audio-visual materials that contain graphic sexual or violent content used in any anti-bullying program. Prior to the use of any such material, the parent/guardian of a child participating in such a program is provided written notice of the parent's/guardian's right to review the material and the right to excuse the child from participating in the part of such program utilizing such material.

In alignment with criteria established by the Virginia Board of Education criteria, the program: The program must:

- Specifies those character traits to be taught, selecting from those which are common to diverse social, cultural, and religious groups. Specific character traits emphasized may include trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship;
- Address the inappropriateness of bullying as defined in Va. Code § 22.1-276.01;
- Be implemented at the elementary and secondary levels;
- Complements the state Standards of Learning;
- Is interwoven into existing curricula, and be taught primarily by example, illustration, and participation. Classroom instruction may also be used to supplement the program;
- Provides for relevant professional development and adequate resources; and
- Includes a method for program evaluation.

Character education shall be intended to educate students regarding those core civic values and virtues which are efficacious to civilized society and are common to the diverse social, cultural, and religious groups of the Commonwealth. It shall not include indoctrination in any particular religious or political belief. Consistent with this purpose, ACPS may teach Virginia's civic values, which are the principles articulated in the Bill of Rights (Article I) of the Constitution of Virginia and the ideals reflected in the seal of the Commonwealth, as described in Va. Code 1-500, as representative of such civic values.

Va. Code 1-500 states "The great seal of the Commonwealth shall consist of two metallic discs, two and one-fourth inches in diameter, with an ornamental border one fourth of an inch wide, with such words and figures engraved as follows: On the obverse, Virtus, the genius of the Commonwealth, dressed as an Amazon, resting on a spear in her right hand, point downward, touching the earth; and holding in her left hand, a sheathed sword, or parazonium, pointing upward; her head erect and face upturned; her left foot on the form of Tyranny represented by the prostrate body of a man, with his head to her left, his fallen crown nearby, a broken chain in his left hand, and a scourge in his right. Above the group and within the border conforming therewith, shall be the word "Virginia," and, in the space below, on a curved line, shall be the motto, "Sic Semper Tyrannis." On the reverse, shall be placed a group consisting of Libertas, holding a wand and pileus in her right hand; on her right, Aeternitas, with a globe and phoenix in her right hand; on the left of Libertas, Ceres, with a cornucopia in her left hand, and an ear of wheat in her right; over this device, in a curved line, the word "Perseverando."

Commented [MS3]: The section below is not in the model policy. It has been added to show a connection between the code (teaching the ideals reflected in the seal of the Commonwealth) and ACPS work to eliminate racism.

Va. Code 1-500 states "The great seal of the Commonwealth shall consist of"... "On the obverse, Virtus, the genius of the Commonwealth, dressed as an Amazon," ... "her left foot on the form of Tyranny represented by the prostrate body of a man" ... "in the space below, on a curved line, shall be the motto, "Sic Semper Tyrannis." On the reverse" ... "in a curved line, the word "Perseverando."

Commented [4]: Copy/paste from the code.

Commented [MS5]: The section below is not in the model policy. It has been added to show a connection between the code (teaching the ideals reflected in the seal of the Commonwealth) and ACPS work to eliminate racism.

Commented [6]: Copy/paste from the code.

ACPS School Board believes that racism is a form of tyranny. Consistent with the ideals expressed in the seal of the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Board believes that high-quality character education includes establishing programs and practices that work to eliminate racism as articulated in the phrase Sic Semper Tyrannis (thus always to tyrants) while to helping students to learn Perserverando (to persevere) in a society where the work to eliminate racism is not complete.

Commented [7]: Board belief statement.

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Adopted: July 1, 2005
Amended: June 1, 2006
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Legal Refs.: Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-23.3, [22.1-207.2:1](#), 22.1-208.01.
VAC 1-500
Constitution of Virginia Article 1

Cross Refs.: IKF [Standards of Learning Assessments, Verified Units of Credit, and Diploma Classifications](#) [The Virginia Assessment Program and Graduation Requirements](#)
IKF-R [The Virginia Assessment Program and Graduation Requirements](#) [Standards of Learning Assessments, Verified Units of Credit, and Diploma Classification Regulations](#)
INB Teaching About Controversial Issues

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